

## INFORMATION SERVICE

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### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Baptist World Alliance responds to Haitian quake**

Washington, DC (BWA) --Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), is coordinating Baptist response and relief efforts to victims of the devastating earthquake that affected Haiti on January 12.

BWAid made an initial pledge of \$20,000 to two conventions and unions in the Caribbean country, and is accepting donations from Baptists from throughout the world on the BWA website, [www.bwanet.org](http://www.bwanet.org).

Already, a team from BWAid Rescue24, the search and rescue arm of the international Baptist aid organization is traveling to Haiti to assist in search for possible survivors. The team of two from Hungary is linking up with rescue groups within the United States, including North Carolina Baptist Men.

Communication with Baptist groups in Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, has been difficult. Reports out of Jamaica, a neighboring island, are that the mother of a Haitian Baptist student at the United Theological College of the West Indies is missing. Other Haitian students of other church traditions at the ecumenical institution are anxious to receive news from or about their families.

"We are frantically trying to extract as much information out of Haiti as we speak," wrote Karl Johnson, general secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union. "Understandably communication has been quite a challenge...and to this point we haven't been able to make contact with [our] partners there."

The BWA office has received enquiries from several countries, including the United States and Panama, seeking information and exploring opportunities for assistance.

The BWAid funds are to be shared equally with two BWA member bodies, the Baptist Convention of Haiti and the Haiti Baptist Mission. "We must make a generous response to this massive catastrophe," said Paul Montacute, BWAid director.

It is estimated that as many as three million people may be directly affected by the earthquake, which occurred close to the densely populated capital of Port Au Prince. The death toll, difficult to estimate, is believed to be in the tens of thousands and possibly several hundred thousand.

Many buildings, including the presidential palace, were destroyed or suffered severe structural damage. The quake, measured at 7.0, was followed by approximately 30 aftershocks measuring as much as 5.9.

Further information may be had by emailing [bwaid@bwanet.org](mailto:bwaid@bwanet.org).

Donations may be made at [www.bwanet.org](http://www.bwanet.org) or sent to:

Baptist World Aid  
405 North Washington Street  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
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